

## EDITORIAL.

THE SPRINGFIELD meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science showed a marked decrease in the number of papers presented before it, and especially in the attendance. The proportional number of botanists was, however, somewhat larger than usual, although the actual number did not reach the point anticipated. During the last few years the botanical element at the annual meetings has been conspicuous both by reason of its numbers and its enthusiasm. It has also usually been one of the leading sections in the number and interesting character of its papers. In these particulars the recent meeting showed a decided falling off. Only twenty-seven botanical papers were placed on the program and quite a number of these were not read, mostly because the authors did not remain in Springfield until the papers were called. Altogether the meeting did not come up to the standard of its predecessors.

IT IS PERTINENT to enquire into the cause of so great a change. Is it due to a general decrease in botanical interest, to the lack of novelty which for awhile might have attracted members, to any interruption of good fellowship which may keep away a faction, to the establishment of other societies drawing off the papers and attendance, to any want of suitable provision for social entertainment, to internal friction or inconvenient arrangement of the program, to the development of the science so that it no longer needs the stimulus of such a gathering, or to some still unmentioned cause? The matter was considerably discussed at Springfield, and much diversity of opinion manifested. It was generally conceded that there was a variety of causes, and that the conditions in the botanical section were not materially different from those affecting the other sections of the Association. Without entering upon these arguments, although some profitable things might doubtless be said, we may state that in our opinion the main difficulties have been met in the proposed arrangements for the meeting next year at Buffalo. Two prominent innovations are to be tried: the meeting will begin on Monday and close on the following Saturday, giving Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to the uninterrupted consideration of papers and other legitimate work of the society, and a provisional program will be issued by the officers of the section at least a month before the time of the meeting. Both of these changes are important.

THE TWO DAYS' break of Saturday and Sunday, which has heretofore occurred, has always been detrimental. The present year the reading of papers began on Friday morning, and the program for this day was fully carried out as printed on the daily announcement, with a good audience present. When Monday morning arrived it was found that many of the members had not returned to Springfield after the excursions of Saturday, and the daily program was but partially carried out, with a very small audience present, and the continuance of the sessions for Tuesday and Wednesday was abandoned. It seems highly probable that such a collapse of the program will be out of the question with the change to uninterrupted sessions proposed for next year.

ISSUING a printed program in advance of the meeting is the most important measure for increasing the interest and making the matters presented thoroughly available to the members in attendance that has yet been tried. If well carried out, it will be possible to know beforehand what subjects are to come up that may interest one, and at what time they can be heard. This arrangement can not fail to add great attractiveness to the meeting, and it is much to be desired that members lend their hearty cooperation to the efforts of the officers in securing a good program.

SOME WORDS might be said about the general usefulness of the Association. So far as the botanists are concerned, they owe much of their present prestige, both at home and abroad, and of their affiliations as a representative national body, to the opportunities created by the Association. The possibilities for gaining additional advantages through the same medium are by no means exhausted. The value of the Association to the individuals who attend its meetings does not admit of a doubt, in the majority of instances, and increases greatly with the increase in attendance.